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NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

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ART. I. — *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, compuesto por MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA. Nueva Edición Clásica, ilustrada con Notas Históricas, Grammaticales y Críticas, por la Academia Española, sus Individuos de Número Pellicer, Arrieta, y Clemencin. Enmendada y corregida por FRANCISCO SALES, A. M., Instructor de Frances y Español en la Universidad de Harvard, en Cambrigia, Estado de Massachusetts, Norte América. 2 vol. 12mo. Boston. 1836.

THE publication, in this country, of an important Spanish classic in the original, with a valuable commentary, is an event of some moment in our literary annals, and indicates a familiarity, rapidly increasing, with the beautiful literature to which it belongs. It may be received as an omen favorable to the cause of modern literature in general, the study of which, in all its varieties, may be urged on substantially the same grounds. The growing importance attached to this branch of education, is visible in other countries, quite as much as our own. It is the natural, or rather necessary result of the changes, which have taken place in the social relations of man, in this revolutionary age. Formerly a nation, pent up within its own barriers, knew less of its neighbours than we now know of what is going on in Siam or Japan. A river, a chain of mountains, an imaginary line, even, parted them as far asunder as if

oceans had rolled between. To speak correctly, it was their imperfect civilization, their ignorance of the means and the subjects of communication, which thus kept them asunder. Now, on the contrary, a change in the domestic institutions of one country can hardly be effected, without a corresponding agitation in those of its neighbours. A treaty of alliance can scarcely be adjusted, without the intervention of a general congress. The sword cannot be unsheathed in one part of Christendom, without thousands leaping from their scabbards in every other. The whole system is bound together by as nice sympathies, as if animated by a common pulse ; and the remotest countries of Europe are brought into contiguity as intimate, as were in ancient times the provinces of a single monarchy.

This intimate association has been prodigiously increased, of late years, by the unprecedented discoveries which science has made, for facilitating intercommunication. The inhabitant of Great Britain, that “ultima Thule” of the ancients, can now run down to the extremity of Italy, in less time than it took Horace to go from Rome to Brundisium. A steamboat of fashionable tourists will touch at all the places of note in the Iliad and Odyssey, in fewer weeks than it would have cost years to an ancient Argonaut, or a crusader of the Middle Ages. Every one, of course, travels, and almost every capital and noted watering place on the continent swarms with its thousands, and Paris with its tens of thousands of itinerant Cockneys, many of whom, perhaps, have not wandered beyond the sound of Bow bells, in their own little island.

Few of these adventurers are so dull, as not to be quickened into something like curiosity, respecting the language and institutions of the strange people, among whom they are thrown ; while the better sort, and more intelligent, are led to study more carefully the new forms, whether in arts or letters, under which human genius is unveiled to them.

The effect of all this is especially visible, in the reforms introduced into the modern systems of education. In both the universities recently established in London, the apparatus for instruction, instead of being limited to the ancient tongues, is extended to the whole circle of modern literature ; and the editorial labors of many of the professors show that they do not sleep on their posts. Periodicals, under the management of the ablest writers, furnish valuable contributions of foreign

criticism and intelligence ; and regular histories of the various continental literatures, a department in which the English are singularly barren, are understood to be now in actual preparation.

But, although barren of literary, the English have made important contributions to the political history of the continental nations. That of Spain has employed some of their best writers, who, it must be admitted, however, have confined themselves so far to the foreign relations of the country, as to have left the domestic in comparative obscurity. Thus, Robertson's great work is quite as much the history of Europe, as of Spain, under Charles the Fifth ; and Watson's "*Reign of Philip the Second*," might with equal propriety be styled "*The War of the Netherlands*," which is its principal burden.

A few works recently published in the United States, have shed far more light on the interior organization and intellectual culture of the Spanish nation. Such, for example, are the writings of Irving, whose gorgeous coloring reflects so clearly the chivalrous splendors of the fifteenth century ; and the travels of Lieut. Slidell, presenting sketches equally animated of the social aspect of that most picturesque of all lands, in the present century. In Mr. Cushing's "*Reminiscences of Spain*," we find, mingled with much characteristic fiction, some very laborious inquiries into curious and recondite points of history. In the purely literary department, Mr. Ticknor's beautiful lectures before the classes of Harvard University, still in manuscript, embrace a far more extensive range of criticism, than is to be found in any Spanish work ; and display, at the same time, a degree of thoroughness and research, which the comparative paucity of materials will compel us to look for in vain in Bouterwek, or his eloquent plagiarist, Sismondi. Mr. Ticknor's successor, Professor Longfellow, favorably known by other compositions, has enriched our language with a noble version of the "*Coplas de Manrique*," the finest gem, beyond all comparison, in the Castilian verse of the fifteenth century. We have also read with pleasure a clever translation of Quevedo's "*Visions*," no very easy achievement, by Mr. Elliot, of Philadelphia ; though the translator is wrong in supposing his the first English version. The first is as old as Queen Anne's time, and was made by the famous Sir Roger L'Estrange. To close the account, Mr. Sales, the venerable instructor in Harvard College, has now given,

for the first time in the New World, an elaborate edition of the prince of Castilian classics, in a form, which may claim, to a certain extent, the merit of originality.

We shall postpone the few remarks we have to make on this edition, to the close of our article ; and, in the mean time, we propose, not to give the life of Cervantes, for which we refer the reader to the eighty-third number of this journal, but to notice such points as are least familiar in his literary history, and especially in regard to the composition and publication of his great work, the *Don Quixote* ; a work which, from its wide and long-established popularity, may be said to constitute part of the literature, not merely of Spain, but of every country in Europe.

The age of Cervantes was that of Philip the Second, when the Spanish monarchy, declining somewhat from its palmy state, was still making extraordinary efforts to maintain it, and even to extend its already overgrown empire. Its navies were on every sea, and its armies in every quarter of the Old World, and in the New. Arms was the only profession worthy of a gentleman ; and there was scarcely a writer of any eminence, certainly no bard, of the age, who, if he were not in orders, had not borne arms, at some period or other, in the service of his country. Cervantes, who, though poor, was born of an ancient family, (it must go hard indeed with a Castilian, who cannot make out a pedigree for himself,) had a full measure of this chivalrous spirit, and, during the first half of his life, we find him in the midst of all the stormy and disastrous scenes of the iron trade of war. His love of the military profession, even after the loss of his hand, or of the use of it, for it is uncertain which, is sufficient proof of his adventurous spirit. In the course of his checkered career, he visited the principal countries in the Mediterranean, and passed five years in melancholy captivity at Algiers. The time was not lost, however, which furnished his keen eye with those glowing pictures of Moslem luxury and magnificence, with which he has enriched his pages. After a life of unprecedented hardship, he returned to his own country, covered with laurels and scars, with very little money in his pocket, but with plenty of that experience, which, regarding him as a novelist, might be considered his stock in trade.

The poet may draw from the depths of his own fancy ; the scholar from his library ; but the proper study of the dramatic

writer, whether in verse or in prose, is man ; — man, as he exists in society. He who would faithfully depict human character, cannot study it too nearly and variously. He must sit down, like Scott, by the fireside of the peasant, and listen to the “ auld wife’s ” tale ; he must preside with Fielding, at a petty justice sessions, or share with some Squire Western in the glorious hazards of a fox hunt ; he must study the mysteries of the deep, and mingle with the singular beings whose destinies he is to describe, on the stormy element itself ; or, like Cervantes, he must wander among other races and other climes, before his pencil can give those chameleon touches, which reflect the shifting, many-colored hues of actual life. He may, indeed, like Rousseau, if it were possible to imagine another Rousseau, turn his thoughts inward, and draw from the depths of his own soul ; but he would see there only his own individual passions and prejudices, and the portraits he might sketch, however various in subordinate details, would be, in their characteristic features, only the reproduction of himself. He might, in short, be a poet, a philosopher, but not a painter of life and manners.

Cervantes had ample scope for pursuing the study of human character, after his return to Spain, in the active life which engaged him, in various parts of the country. In Andalusia he might have found the models of the sprightly wit, and delicate irony, with which he has seasoned his fictions ; in Seville, in particular, he was brought in contact with the fry of small sharpers and pickpockets, who make so respectable a figure in his *picaresco* novels ; and in La Mancha, he not only found the geography of his Don Quixote, but that whimsical contrast of pride and poverty in the natives, which has furnished the outlines of many a broad caricature to the comic writers of Spain.

During all this while, he had made himself known only by his pastoral fiction, the “ Galatea,” a beautiful specimen of an insipid class ; which, with all its literary merits, afforded no scope for the power of depicting human character, which he possessed, perhaps unknown to himself. He wrote, also, a good number of plays, all of which except two, and these recovered only at the close of the last century, have perished. One of these, “ The Siege of Numantia,” displays that truth of drawing, and strength of color, which mark the consummate artist. It was not until he had reached his fifty-seventh year,

that he completed the First Part of his great work, the *Don Quixote*. The most celebrated novels, unlike most works of imagination, seem to have been the production of the later period of life. Fielding was between forty and fifty, when he wrote his "*Tom Jones*." Richardson was sixty, or very near it, when he wrote "*Clarissa*." And Scott was some years over forty, when he began the series of the *Waverley* novels. The world, the school of the novelist, cannot be run through like the terms of a university, and the knowledge of its manifold varieties must be the result of long and diligent training.

The First Part of the *Quixote* was begun, as the author tells us, in a prison ; to which he had been brought, not by crime, or debt, but by some offence, probably, to the worthy people of La Mancha. It is not the only work of genius, which has struggled into being in such unfavorable quarters. "*The Pilgrim's Progress*," the most popular, probably, of English fictions, was composed under similar circumstances. But we doubt if such brilliant fancies, and such flashes of humor ever lighted up the walls of the prison-house, before the time of Cervantes.

The First Part of the *Don Quixote* was given to the public in 1605. Cervantes, when the time arrived for launching his satire against the old, deep-rooted prejudices of his countrymen, probably regarded it, as well he might, as little less rash than his own hero's tilt against the windmills. He sought, accordingly, to shield himself under the cover of a powerful name, and asked leave to dedicate the book to a Castilian grandee, the duke de Bejar. The duke, it is said, whether ignorant of the design, or doubting the success of the work, would have declined ; but Cervantes urged him first to peruse a single chapter. The audience summoned to sit in judgment, were so delighted with the first pages, that they would not abandon the novel, till they had heard the whole of it. The duke, of course, without further hesitation, condescended to allow his name to be inserted in this passport to immortality.

There is nothing very improbable in the story. It reminds one of a similar experiment by St. Pierre, who submitted his manuscript of "*Paul and Virginia*" to a circle of French *littérateurs*, Mons. and Mad. Necker, the Abbé Galiani, Thomas, Buffon, and some others, all wits of the first water in the metropolis. Hear the result, in the words of his biographer, or rather his agreeable translator. "At first the author was heard in silence,

by degrees the attention grew languid, they began to whisper, to gape, and listened no longer. M. de Buffon looked at his watch, and called for his horses. Those near the door slipped out; Thomas went to sleep; M. Necker laughed to see the ladies weep; and the ladies, ashamed of their tears, did not dare to confess that they had been interested. The reading being finished, nothing was praised. Mad. Necker alone criticized the conversation of Paul and the old man. This *moral* appeared to her tedious and common-place; it broke the action, chilled the reader, and was a sort of *glass of iced water*. M. de St. Pierre retired in a state of indescribable depression. He regarded what had passed as his sentence of death. The effect of his work on an audience like that to which he had read it, left him no hope for the future." Yet this work was "Paul and Virginia," one of the most popular books in the French language. So much for criticism!

The truth seems to be, that the judgment of no private circle, however well qualified by taste and talent, can afford a sure prognostic of that of the great public. If the manuscript to be criticized is our friend's, of course the verdict is made up before perusal. If some great man modestly sues for our approbation, our self-complacency has been too much flattered for us to withhold it. If it be a little man, (and St. Pierre was but a little man at that time,) our prejudices, the prejudices of poor human nature, will be very apt to take an opposite direction. Be the cause what it may, whoever rests his hopes of public favor on the smiles of a *coterie*, runs the risk of finding himself very unpleasantly undeceived. Many a trim bark, which has flaunted gayly in a summer lake, has gone to pieces amid the billows and breakers of the rude ocean.

The prognostic, in the case of Cervantes, however, proved more correct. His work produced an instantaneous effect on the community. He had struck a note which found an echo in every bosom. Four editions were published in the course of the first year; two in Madrid, one at Valencia, and another at Lisbon.

This success, almost unexampled in any age, was still more extraordinary in one, in which the reading public was comparatively limited. That the book found its way speedily into the very highest circles in the kingdom is evident from the well-known exclamation of Philip the Third, when he saw a student laughing immoderately over some volume; "The man must

be either out of his wits, or reading *Don Quixote*." Notwithstanding this, its author felt none of that sunshine of royal favor, which would have been so grateful in his necessities.

The period was that of the golden prime of Castilian literature. But the monarch on the throne, one of the ill-starred dynasty of Austria, would have been better suited to the darkest of the Middle Ages. His hours, divided between his devotions and his debaucheries, left nothing to spare for letters ; and his minister, the arrogant Duke of Lerma, was too much absorbed by his own selfish, though shallow schemes of policy, to trouble himself with romance writers, or their satirist. Cervantes, however, had entered on a career, which, as he intimates in some of his verses, might lead to fame, but not to fortune. Happily, he did not compromise his fame, by precipitating the execution of his works, from motives of temporary profit. It was not till several years after the publication of the *Don Quixote*, that he gave to the world his *Exemplary Novels*, as he called them ; fictions, which, differing from any thing before known, not only in the Castilian, but, in some respects, in any other literature, gave ample scope to his dramatic talent, in the contrivance of situations, and the nice delineation of character. These works, whose diction was uncommonly rich and attractive, were popular from the first.

One cannot but be led to inquire, why, with such success as an author, he continued to be so straitened in his circumstances, as he plainly intimates was the case, more than once in his writings. From the *Don Quixote*, notwithstanding its great run, he probably received little, since he had parted with the entire copyright before publication, when the work was regarded as an experiment, the result of which was quite doubtful. It is not so easy to explain the difficulty, when his success as an author had been so completely established. Cervantes intimates his dissatisfaction, in more than one place in his writings, with the booksellers themselves. "What, Sir!" replies an author introduced into his *Don Quixote*, "would you have me sell the profit of my labor to a bookseller, for three maravedis a sheet? for that is the most they will bid, nay, and expect, too, I should thank them for the offer." This burden of lamentation, the alleged illiberality of the publisher towards the poor author, is as old as the art of book-making itself. But the public get the account from the party aggrieved, only. If the bookseller reported his own case, we should, no doubt, have a different version. If Cervantes was

in the right, the trade in Castile showed a degree of dexterity in their proceedings, which richly entitled them to the pillory. In one of his tales, we find a certain licentiate complaining of "the tricks and deceptions they put upon an author, when they buy a copy-right from him ; and still more, the manner in which they cheat him, if he prints the book at his own charges ; since nothing is more common than for them to agree for fifteen hundred, and have privily perhaps as many as three thousand thrown off, one half, at the least, of which they sell, not for his profit, but their own."

The writings of Cervantes appear to have gained him, however, two substantial friends in Cabra, Count of Lemos, and the Archbishop of Toledo, of the ancient family of Rojas ; and the patronage of these illustrious individuals has been nobly recompensed, by having their names for ever associated with the imperishable productions of genius.

There was, however, one kind of patronage wanting, in this early age ; that of a great, enlightened community, — the only patronage which can be received, without some sense of degradation, by a generous mind. There was, indeed, one golden channel of public favor, and that was the theatre. The drama has usually flourished most at the period, when a nation is beginning to taste the sweets of literary culture. Such was the early part of the seventeenth century in Europe ; the age of Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher, in England ; of Ariosto, Machiavelli, and the wits who first successfully wooed the comic muse of Italy ; of the great Corneille, some years later, indeed, in France ; and of that miracle, or rather "monster of nature," as Cervantes styled him, Lope de Vega, in Spain. Theatrical exhibitions are a combination of the material with the intellectual ; at which the ordinary spectator derives less pleasure, probably, from the beautiful creations of the poet, than from the scenic decorations, music, and other accessories, which address themselves to the senses. The fondness for spectacle is characteristic of an early period of society ; and the theatre is the most brilliant of pageants. With the progress of education and refinement, men become less open to, or, at least, less dependent on the pleasures of sense, and seek their enjoyment in more elevated and purer sources. Thus it is that, instead of

"Sweating in the crowded theatre, squeezed
And bored with elbow-points through both our sides,"

as the sad minstrel of nature sings, we sit quietly at home, enjoying the pleasures of fiction around our own firesides, and the poem or the novel takes the place of the acted drama. The decline of dramatic writing may justly be lamented, as that of one of the most beautiful varieties in the garden of literature. But it must be admitted to be both a symptom and a necessary consequence of the advance of civilization.

The popularity of the stage at the period of which we are speaking, in Spain, was greatly augmented by the personal influence and reputation of Lope de Vega, the idol of his countrymen, who threw off the various inventions of his genius with a rapidity and profusion that almost staggers credibility. It is impossible to state the results of his labors in any form that will not powerfully strike the imagination. Thus, he has left 21,300,000 verses in print, besides a mass of manuscript. He furnished the theatre, according to the statement of his intimate friend, Montalvan, with 1800 regular plays, and 400 *autos* or religious dramas, — all acted. He composed, according to his own statement, more than 100 comedies in the almost incredible space of twenty-four hours each; and a comedy averaged between two and three thousand verses, great part of them rhymed, and interspersed with sonnets, and other more difficult forms of versification. He lived seventy-two years, and supposing him to have employed fifty of that period in composition, although he filled a variety of engrossing vocations during that time, he must have averaged a play a week, to say nothing of twenty-one volumes, quarto, of miscellaneous works, including five epics, written in his leisure moments, and all now in print!

The only achievements we can recall in literary history, bearing any resemblance to, though falling far short of this, are those of our illustrious cotemporary, Sir Walter Scott. The complete edition of his works, recently advertised by Murray, with the addition of two volumes, of which Murray has not the copy-right, probably contains ninety volumes, small octavo. Of these, forty-eight volumes of novels, and twenty-one of history and biography, were produced between 1814 and 1831, or in seventeen years. These would give an average of four volumes a year, or one for every three months, during the whole of that period; to which must be added twenty-one volumes of poetry and prose, previously published. The mere mechanical execution of so much work, both in his case

and Lope de Vega's, would seem to be scarce possible, in the limits assigned. Scott, too, was as variously occupied in other ways as his Spanish rival ; and probably, from the social hospitality of his life, spent a much larger portion of his time in no literary occupation at all.

Notwithstanding we have amused ourselves, at the expense of the reader's patience, perhaps, with these calculations, this certainly is not the standard, by which we should recommend to estimate works of genius. Wit is not to be measured, like broadcloth, by the yard. Easy writing, as the adage says, and as we all know, is apt to be very hard reading. This brings to our recollection a conversation, in the presence of Captain Basil Hall, in which some allusion having been made to the astonishing amount of Scott's daily composition, the literary Argonaut remarked, "There was nothing astonishing in all that ; and that he did as much himself, nearly every day, before breakfast." Some one of the company unkindly asked, "whether he thought the *quality* was the same." It is the quality, undoubtedly, which makes the difference. And in this view, Lope de Vega's miracles lose much of their effect. Of all his multitudinous dramas, one or two only retain possession of the stage ; and few, very few, are now even read. His facility of composition was like that of an Italian improvisatore, whose fertile fancy easily clothes itself in verse, in a language, the vowel terminations of which afford such a plenitude of rhymes. The Castilian presents even greater facilities for this than the Italian. Lope de Vega was an improvisatore.

With all his negligences and defects, however, Lope's interesting intrigues, easy, sprightly dialogue, infinite variety of inventions, and the breathless rapidity with which they followed one another, so dazzled and bewildered the imagination, that he completely controlled the public, and became, in the words of Cervantes, "sole monarch of the stage." The public repaid him with such substantial gratitude, as has never been shown, probably, to any other of its favorites. His fortune, at one time, although he was careless of his expenses, amounted to one hundred thousand ducats, equal, probably, to between seven and eight hundred thousand dollars of the present day. In the same street, in which dwelt this spoiled child of fortune, who, amidst the caresses of the great, and the lavish smiles of the public, could complain that his merits were neglected, lived Cervantes, struggling under adversity,

or at least earning a painful subsistence by the labors of his immortal pen. What a contrast do these pictures present to the imagination! If the suffrages of a *coterie*, as we have said, afford no warrant for those of the public, the example before us proves that the award of one's cotemporaries is quite as likely to be set aside by posterity. Lope de Vega, who gave his name to his age, has now fallen into neglect, even among his countrymen; while the fame of Cervantes, gathering strength with time, has become the pride of his own nation, as his works still continue to be the delight of the whole civilized world.

However stinted may have been the recompense of his deserts at home, it is gratifying to observe how widely his fame was diffused in his own lifetime, and that in foreign countries, at least, he enjoyed the full consideration, to which he was entitled. An interesting anecdote, illustrating this, is recorded, which, as we have never seen it in English, we will lay before the reader. On occasion of a visit made by the Archbishop of Toledo to the French ambassador, resident at Madrid, the prelate's suite fell into conversation with the attendants of the minister, in the course of which Cervantes was mentioned. The French gentlemen expressed their unqualified admiration of his writings, specifying the *Galatea*, *Don Quixote*, and the *Novels*, which, they said, were read in all the countries round, and in France particularly, where there were some, who might be said to know them actually by heart. They intimated their desire to become personally acquainted with so eminent a man, and asked many questions respecting his present occupations, his circumstances, and way of life. To all this, the Castilians could only reply, that he had borne arms in the service of his country, and was now old and poor. "What!" exclaimed one of the strangers, "is Señor Cervantes not in good circumstances? Why is he not maintained, then, out of the public treasury?" "Heaven forbid," rejoined another, "that his necessities should be ever relieved, if it is these which make him write; since it is his poverty that makes the world rich."

There are other evidences, though not of so pleasing a character, of the eminence which he had reached at home, in the jealousy and ill will of his brother poets. The Castilian poets of that day seem to have possessed a full measure of that irritability, which has been laid at the door of all their tribe,

since the days of Horace ; and the freedom of Cervantes's literary criticisms, in his *Don Quixote* and other writings, though never personal in their character, brought down on his head a storm of arrows, some of which, if not sent with much force, were, at least, well steeped in venom. Lope de Vega is even said to have appeared among the assailants, and a sonnet, still preserved, is currently imputed to him, in which, after much eulogy on himself, he predicts that the works of his rival will find their way into the kennel. But the author of this bad prophecy, and worse poetry, could never have been the great Lope, who showed, on all occasions, a generous spirit, and whose literary success must have made such an assault unnecessary, and in the highest degree unmanly. On the contrary, we have evidence of a very different feeling, in the homage which he renders to the merits of his illustrious contemporary, in more than one passage of his acknowledged works ; especially in his "*Laurel de Apolo*," in which he concludes his poetical panegyric with the following touching conceit ;

"Porque se diga que una mano herida
Pudo dar á su dueño eterna vida."

This poem was published by Lope in 1630, fourteen years after the death of his rival ; notwithstanding, Mr. Lockhart informs his readers, in his biographical preface to the *Don Quixote*, that "as Lope de Vega was dead, (1615,) there was no one to divide with Cervantes the literary empire of his country."

In the dedication of his ill-fated comedies, 1615, (for Cervantes, like most other celebrated novelists, found it difficult to concentrate his expansive vein within the compass of dramatic rules,) the public was informed that "*Don Quixote* was already booted," and preparing for another sally. It may seem strange, that the author, considering the great popularity of his hero, had not sent him on his adventures before. But he had probably regarded them as already terminated ; and he had good reason to do so, since every incident in the *First Part*, as it has been styled only since the publication of the *Second*, is complete in itself, and the *Don*, although not actually killed on the stage, is noticed as dead, and his epitaph transcribed for the reader. However this may be, the immediate execution of his purpose, so long delayed, was precipi-

tated by an event, equally unwelcome and unexpected. This was the continuation of his work by another hand.

The author's name, his *nom de guerre*, was Avellaneda, a native of Tordesillas. Adopting the original idea of Cervantes, he goes forward, with the same characters, through similar scenes of comic extravagance, in the course of which he perpetrates sundry plagiarisms from the First Part, and has some incidents so much resembling those in the Second Part, already written by Cervantes, that it has been supposed he must have had access to his manuscript. It is more probable, as the resemblance is but general, that he obtained his knowledge through hints, which may have fallen, in conversation, from Cervantes, in the progress of his own work. The spurious continuation had some little merit, and attracted, probably, some interest, as any work, conducted under so popular a name, could not have failed to do. It was, however, on the whole, a vulgar performance, thickly sprinkled with such gross scurrility and indecency, as was too strong even for the palate of that not very fastidious age. The public feeling may be gathered from the fact, that the author did not dare to depart from his incognito, and claim the honors of a triumph. The most diligent inquiries have established nothing further than that he was an Arragonese, judging from his diction, and from the complexion of certain passages in the work probably an ecclesiastic, and one of the swarm of small dramatists, who felt themselves rudely handled by the criticism of Cervantes. The work was subsequently translated, or rather paraphrased, by Le Sage, who has more than once given a substantial value to gems of little price in Castilian literature, by the brilliancy of his setting. The original work of Avellaneda, always deriving an interest from the circumstances of its production, has been reprinted in the present century, and is not difficult to be met with. To have thus coolly invaded an author's own property, to have filched from him the splendid, though unfinished creations of his genius, before his own face, and while, as was publicly known, he was in the very process of completing them, must be admitted to be an act of unblushing effrontery, not surpassed in the annals of literature.

Cervantes was much annoyed, it appears, by the circumstance. The continuation of Avellaneda reached him, probably, when on the fifty-ninth chapter of his Second Part. At

least, from that time he begins to discharge his gall on the head of the offender, who, it should be added, had consummated his impudence by sneering, in his introduction, at the qualifications of Cervantes. The best retort of the latter, however, was the publication of his own book, which followed at the close of 1615.

The English novelist, Richardson, experienced a treatment not unlike that of the Castilian. His popular story of *Pamela* was continued by another and very inferior hand, under the title of "*Pamela in High Life.*" The circumstance prompted Richardson to undertake the continuation himself; and it turned out, like most others, a decided failure. Indeed, a skilful continuation seems to be the most difficult work of art. The first effort of the author breaks, as it were, unexpectedly on the public, taking their judgments by surprise, and by its very success creating a standard, by which the author himself is subsequently to be tried. Before, he was compared with others. He is now to be compared with himself. The public expectation has been raised. A degree of excellence, which might have found favor at first, will now scarcely be tolerated. It will not even suffice for him to maintain his own level. He must rise above himself. The reader, in the mean while, has naturally filled up the blank, and insensibly conducted the characters and the story to a termination, in his own way. As the reality seldom keeps pace with the ideal, the author's execution will hardly come up to the imaginations of his readers; at any rate, it will differ from them, and so far be displeasing. We experience something of this, in the dramas borrowed from popular novels, where the development of the characters by the dramatic author, and the new direction given to the original story in his hands, rarely fail to offend the taste and preconceived ideas of the spectator. To feel the force of this, it is only necessary to see the *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, and other plays, dramatized from the *Waverley* novels.

Some part of the failure of such continuations is, no doubt, fairly chargeable, in most instances, on the author himself, who goes to his new task with little of his primitive buoyancy and vigor. He no longer feels the same interest in his own labors, which, losing all their freshness, have become as familiar to his imagination as a thrice-told tale. The new composition has, of course, a different complexion from the former,

cold, stiff, and disjointed, like a bronze statue, whose parts have been separately put together, instead of being cast in one mould, when the whole metal was in a state of fusion.

The continuation of Cervantes forms a splendid exception to the general rule. The popularity of his First Part had drawn forth abundance of criticism, and he availed himself of it, to correct some material blemishes in the design of the Second; while an assiduous culture of the Castilian enabled him to enrich his style with greater variety and beauty.

He had now reached the zenith of his fame; and the profits of his continuation may have relieved the pecuniary embarrassments under which he had struggled. But he was not long to enjoy his triumph. Before his death, which took place in the following year, he completed his romance of "*Persiles and Sigismunda*," the dedication to which, written a few days before his death, is strongly characteristic of its writer. It is addressed to his old patron, the Conde de Lemos, then absent from the country. After saying, in the words of the old Spanish proverb, that he had "*one foot in the stirrup*," in allusion to the distant journey, on which he was soon to set out, he adds, "*Yesterday I received the extreme unction, [the last office of the Roman Catholic Church to the dying]; but, now that the shadows of death are closing around me, I still cling to life, from the love of it, as well as from the desire to behold you again. But if it is decreed otherwise, (and the will of Heaven be done,) your Excellency will at least feel assured, there was one person, whose wish to serve you was greater than the love of life itself.*" After these reminiscences of his benefactor, he expresses his own purpose, should life be spared, to complete several works he had already begun. Such were the last words of this illustrious man; breathing the same generous sensibility, the same ardent love of letters, and beautiful serenity of temper, which distinguished him through life. He died a few days after this, on the 23d of April, 1616. His remains were laid, without funeral pomp, in the monastery of the Holy Trinity, at Madrid. No memorial points out the spot to the eye of the traveller, nor is it known at this day. And, while many a costly construction has been piled on the ashes of the little great, to the shame of Spain be it spoken, no monument has yet been erected in honor of the greatest genius she has produced. He has built, however, a monument for himself, more durable than brass or sculptured marble.

Don Quixote is too familiar to the reader, to require any analysis ; but we will enlarge on a few circumstances attending its composition, but little known to the English scholar, which may enable him to form a better judgment for himself. The age of chivalry, as depicted in romances, could never, of course, have had any real existence. But the sentiments which are described as animating that age, have been found more or less operative in different countries and different periods of society. In Spain, especially, this influence is to be discerned from a very early date. Its inhabitants may be said to have lived in a romantic atmosphere, in which all the extravagances of chivalry were nourished by their peculiar situation. Their hostile relations with the Moslêm kept alive the full glow of religious and patriotic feeling. Their history is one interminable crusade. An enemy always on the borders, invited perpetual displays of personal daring and adventure. The refinement and magnificence of the Spanish Arabs throw a lustre over these contests, such as could not be reflected from the rude skirmishes with their Christian neighbours. Lofty sentiments, embellished by the softer refinements of courtesy, were blended in the martial bosom of the Spaniard, and Spain became emphatically the land of romantic chivalry.

The very laws themselves, conceived in this spirit, contributed greatly to foster it. Thus, the ancient code of Alfonso the Tenth, in the thirteenth century, after many minute regulations for the deportment of the good knight, enjoins on him to "invoke the name of his mistress in the fight, that it may infuse new ardor into his soul, and preserve him from the commission of unknighly actions." Such laws were not a dead letter. The history of Spain shows that the sentiment of romantic gallantry penetrated the nation more deeply, and continued longer, than in any other quarter of Christendom.

Foreign chroniclers, as well as domestic, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, notice the frequent appearance of Spanish knights in different courts of Europe, whither they had travelled, in the language of an old writer, "to seek honor and reverence" by their feats of arms. In the Paston Letters written in the time of Henry the Sixth, of England, we find a notice of a Castilian knight, who presented himself before the court, and, with his mistress's favor around his arm, challenged the English cavaliers "to run a course of sharp spears with him, for his sovereign lady's sake." Pulgar, a Spanish

chronicler of the close of the sixteenth century, speaks of this roving knight errantry, as a thing of familiar occurrence among the young cavaliers of his day. And Oviedo, who lived somewhat later, notices the necessity, under which every true knight found himself, of being in love, or *feigning to be so*, in order to give a suitable lustre and incentive to his achievements. But the most singular proof of the extravagant pitch, to which these romantic feelings were carried in Spain, occurs in the account of the jousts appended to the fine old chronicle of Alvaro de Luna, published by the Academy in 1784. The principal champion was named Sueño de Quenones, who, with nine companions in arms, defended a pass at Orbigo, not far from the shrine of Compestella, against all comers, in the presence of King John the Second, and his court. The object of this passage of arms, as it was called, was to release the knight from the obligation, imposed on him by his mistress, of publicly wearing an iron collar round his neck every Thursday. The jousts continued for thirty days, and the doughty champions fought without shield or target, with weapons bearing points of Milan steel. Six hundred and twenty-seven encounters took place, and one hundred and sixty-six lances were broken, when the emprise was declared to be fairly achieved. The whole affair is narrated, with becoming gravity, by an eyewitness, and the reader may fancy himself perusing the adventures of a Launcelot, or an Amadis. The reader may find the particulars of this tourney detailed at length, in Mills's *Chivalry*, (Vol. II., chap. 5.) where, however, the author has defrauded the successful champions of their full honors, by incorrectly reporting the number of lances broken, as only sixty-six.

The taste for these romantic extravagances naturally fostered a corresponding taste for the perusal of tales of chivalry. Indeed, they acted reciprocally on each other. These chimerical legends had once also beguiled the long evenings of our Norman ancestors ; but, in the progress of civilization, had gradually given way to other and more natural forms of composition. They still maintained their ground in Italy, whither they had passed later, and where they were consecrated by the hand of genius. But Italy was not the true soil of chivalry, and the inimitable fictions of Bojardo, Pulci, and Ariosto, were composed with that lurking smile of half-suppressed mirth, which, far from a serious tone, could raise only a corresponding smile of incredulity in the reader.

In Spain, however, the marvels of romance were all taken in perfect good faith. Not that they were received as literally true, but the reader surrendered himself up to the illusion, and was moved to admiration by the recital of deeds, which, viewed in any other light than as a wild frolic of imagination, would be supremely ridiculous. For these tales had not the merit of a seductive style and melodious versification, to relieve them. They were, for the most part, an ill-digested mass of incongruities, in which there was as little keeping and probability in the characters, as in the incidents; while the whole was told in that stilted "Hercles' vein," and with that licentiousness of allusion and imagery, which could not fail to debase both the taste and the morals of the youthful reader. The mind familiarized with these monstrous, over-colored pictures, lost all relish for the chaste and sober productions of art. The love of the gigantic and the marvellous indisposed the reader for the simple delineations of truth in real history. The feelings expressed by a sensible Spaniard of the sixteenth century, the anonymous author of the "*Dialogo de las Lenguas*," probably represent those of many of his cotemporaries. "Ten of the best years of my life," says he, "were spent no more profitably than in devouring these lies, which I did even while eating my meals; and the consequence of this depraved appetite was, that if I took in hand any true book of history, or one that passed for such, I was unable to wade through it."

The influence of this meretricious taste was nearly as fatal on the historian himself as on his readers; since he felt compelled to minister to the public appetite such a mixture of the marvellous in all his narrations, as materially discredited the veracity of his writings. Every hero became a demigod, who put the labors of Hercules to shame; and every monk, or old hermit, was converted into a saint, who wrought more miracles, before and after death, than would have sufficed to canonize a whole monastery. The fabulous ages of Greece are scarcely more fabulous than the close of the Middle Ages in Spanish history, which compares very discreditably, in this particular, with similar periods in most European countries. The confusion of fact and fiction continues, indeed, to a very late age; and as one gropes his way through the twilight of tradition, he is at a loss whether the dim objects are men or shadows. The most splendid names in Castilian annals, names incorporated

with the glorious achievements of the land, and embalmed alike in the page of the chronicler, and the song of the minstrel, names associated with the most stirring, patriotic recollections, are now found to have been the mere coinage of fancy. There seems to be no more reason for believing in the real existence of Bernardo del Carpio, of whom so much has been said and sung, than in that of Charlemagne's paladins, or of the knights of the Round Table. Even the Cid, the national hero of Spain, is contended, by some of the shrewdest native critics of our own times, to be an imaginary being; and it is certain, that the splendid fabric of his exploits, familiar as household words to every Spaniard, has crumbled to pieces under the rude touch of modern criticism. — These heroes, it is true, flourished before the introduction of romances of chivalry. But the legends of their prowess have been multiplied beyond bounds, in consequence of the taste created by these romances, and an easy faith accorded to them, at the same time, such as would never have been conceded in any other civilized nation. In short, the elements of truth and falsehood became so blended, that history was converted into romance, and romance received the credit due only to history.

These mischievous consequences drew down the animadversions of thinking men, and at length provoked the interference of government itself. In 1543, Charles the Fifth, by an edict, prohibited books of chivalry from being imported into his American colonies, or being printed, or even read there. The legislation for America proceeded from the crown alone, which had always regarded the New World as its own exclusive property. In 1555, however, the Cortes of the kingdom presented a *petition*, (which requires only the royal signature to become at once the law,) setting forth the manifold evils resulting from these romances. There is an air at once both of simplicity and solemnity, in the language of this instrument, which may amuse the reader. "Moreover, we say that it is very notorious, what mischief has been done to young men and maidens, and other persons, by the perusal of books full of lies and vanities, like Amadis, and works of that description; since young people, especially, from their natural idleness, resort to this kind of reading, and becoming enamoured of passages of love or arms, or other nonsense which they find set forth therein, when situations at all analogous offer, are led to act much more extravagantly than they other-

wise would have done. And many times the daughter, when her mother has locked her up safely at home, amuses herself with reading these books, which do her more hurt than she would have received from going abroad. All which redounds, not only to the dishonor of individuals, but to the great detriment of conscience, by diverting the affections from holy, true, and Christian doctrine, to those wicked vanities, with which the wits, as we have intimated, are completely bewildered. To remedy this, we entreat your Majesty that no book treating of such matters be henceforth permitted to be read, that those now printed be collected and burned, and that none be published hereafter, without special license. By which measures, your Majesty will render great service to God, as well as to these kingdoms," &c. &c.

Notwithstanding this emphatic expression of public disapprobation, these enticing works maintained their popularity. The emperor Charles, unmindful of his own interdict, took great satisfaction in their perusal. The royal *fêtes* frequently commemorated the fabulous exploits of chivalry; and Philip the Second, then a young man, appeared in these spectacles, in the character of an adventurous knight-errant. Moratin enumerates more than seventy bulky romances, all produced in the sixteenth century, some of which passed through several editions, while many more works of the kind have, doubtless, escaped his researches. The last on his catalogue was printed in 1602, and was composed by one of the nobles at the court. Such was the state of things, when Cervantes gave to the world the First Part of his *Don Quixote*; and it was against prejudices, which had so long bade defiance to public opinion and the law itself, that he now aimed the delicate shafts of his irony. It was a perilous emprise.

To effect his end, he did not produce a mere humorous travesty, like several of the Italian poets, who, having selected some well-known character in romance, make him fall into such low dialogue, and such gross buffoonery, as contrast most ridiculously with his assumed name. For this, though a very good jest in its way, was but a jest; and Cervantes wanted the biting edge of satire. He was, besides, too much of a poet, was too deeply penetrated with the true spirit of chivalry, not to respect the noble qualities, which were the basis of it. He shows this in the *auto da fé* of the Don's library, where he spares the *Amadis de Gaula* and some

others, the best of their kind. He had once himself, as he tells us, actually commenced a serious tale of chivalry.

Cervantes brought forward a personage, therefore, in whom were embodied all those generous virtues, which belong to chivalry, — disinterestedness, contempt of danger, unblemished honor, knightly courtesy, and those aspirations after ideal excellence, which, if empty dreams, are the dreams of a magnanimous spirit. They are, indeed, represented by Cervantes as too ethereal for this world, and are successively dispelled, as they come in contact with the coarse realities of life. It is this view of the subject, which has led Sismondi, among other critics, to consider that the principal end of the author was “the ridicule of enthusiasm — the contrast of the heroic with the vulgar;” and he sees something profoundly sad in the conclusions to which it leads. This sort of criticism appears to be over-refined. It resembles the efforts of some commentators to allegorize the great epics of Homer and Virgil, throwing a disagreeable mistiness over the story, by converting mere shadows into substances, and substances into shadows.

The great purpose of Cervantes was, doubtless, that expressly avowed by himself; namely, to correct the popular taste for romances of chivalry. It is unnecessary to look for any other, in so plain a tale; although it is true, the conduct of the story produces impressions on the reader, to a certain extent, like those suggested by Sismondi. The melancholy tendency, however, is, in a great degree, counteracted by the exquisitely ludicrous character of the incidents. Perhaps, after all, if we are to hunt for a moral, as the key of the fiction, we may, with more reason, pronounce it to be, the necessity of proportioning our undertakings to our capacities.

The mind of the hero, Don Quixote, is an ideal world, into which Cervantes has poured all the rich stores of his own imagination, the poet's golden dreams, high romantic exploit, and the sweet visions of pastoral happiness; — the gorgeous chimeras of the fancied age of chivalry, which had so long entranced the world, — splendid illusions, which, floating before us like the airy bubbles which the child throws off from his pipe, reflect, in a thousand variegated tints, the rude objects around, until, brought into collision with these, they are dashed in pieces, and melt into air. These splendid images derive tenfold beauty from the rich, antique coloring of

the author's language, skilfully imitated from the old romances, but which necessarily escapes in the translation into a foreign tongue. Don Quixote's insanity operates both in mistaking the ideal for the real, and the real for the ideal. Whatever he has found in romances, he believes to exist in the world ; and he converts all he meets with in the world into the visions of his romances. It is difficult to say, which of the two produces the most ludicrous result.

For the better exposure of these mad fancies, Cervantes has not only put them into action in real life, but contrasted them with another character, which may be said to form the reverse side of his hero's. Honest Sancho represents the material principle, as perfectly as his master does the intellectual or ideal. He is of the earth, earthy. Sly, selfish, sensual, his dreams are not of glory, but of good feeding. His only concern is for his carcass. His notions of honor appear to be much the same with those of his jovial cotemporary, Falstaff, as conveyed in his memorable soliloquy. In the sublime night piece, which ends with the fulling-mills, — truly sublime till we reach the *denouement*, — Sancho asks his master, “Why need you go about this adventure ? It is main dark, and there is never a living soul sees us ; we have nothing to do but to sheer off, and get out of harm's way. Who is there to take notice of our flinching ?” Can any thing be imagined, more exquisitely opposed to the true spirit of chivalry ? The whole compass of fiction nowhere displays the power of contrast so forcibly, as in these two characters ; perfectly opposed to each other, not only in their minds, and general habits, but in the minutest details of personal appearance.

It was a great effort of art for Cervantes to maintain the dignity of his hero's character, in the midst of the whimsical and ridiculous distresses, in which he has perpetually involved him. His infirmity leads us to distinguish between his character and his conduct, and to absolve him from all responsibility for the latter. The author's art is no less shown in regard to the other principal figure in the piece, Sancho Panza, who, with the most contemptible qualities, contrives to keep a strong hold on our interest by the kindness of his nature, and his shrewd understanding. He is far too shrewd a person, indeed, to make it natural for him to have followed so crack-brained a master, unless bribed by the promise of a substantial

recompense. He is a personification, as it were, of the popular wisdom ; a "bundle of proverbs," as his master somewhere styles him ; and proverbs are the most compact form in which the wisdom of a people is digested. They have been collected into several distinct works in Spain, where they exceed in number those of any other, if not every other country in Europe. As many of them are of great antiquity, they are of inestimable price with the Castilian purists, as affording rich samples of obsolete idioms and the various mutations of the language.

The subordinate portraits in the romance, though not wrought with the same care, are admirable studies of national character. In this view, the *Don Quixote* may be said to form an epoch in the history of letters, as the original of that kind of composition, the *Novel of Character* ; which is one of the distinguishing peculiarities of modern literature. When well executed, this sort of writing rises to the dignity of history itself, and may be said to perform no insignificant part of the functions of the latter. History describes men less as they are, than as they appear ; as they are playing a part on the great political theatre,—men in masquerade. It rests on state documents, which too often cloak real purposes under an artful veil of policy, or on the accounts of cotemporaries, blinded by passion or interest. Even without these deductions, the revolutions of states, their wars, and their intrigues, do not present the only aspect, nor, perhaps, the most interesting, under which human nature can be studied. It is man in his domestic relations ; around his own fireside, where alone his real character can be truly disclosed ; in his ordinary occupations in society, whether for purposes of profit or of pleasure ; in his every-day manner of living ; his tastes and opinions, as drawn out in social intercourse ; it is, in short, under all those forms which make up the interior of society, that man is to be studied, if we would get the true form and pressure of the age,—if, in short, we would obtain clear and correct ideas of the actual progress of civilization.

But these topics do not fall within the scope of the historian. He cannot find authentic materials for them. They belong to the novelist, who, indeed, contrives his incidents, and creates his characters, but who, if true to his art, animates them with the same tastes, sentiments, and motives of action, which belong to the period of his fiction. His portrait is not the less true,

because no individual has sat for it. He has seized the physiognomy of the times. Who is there, that does not derive a more distinct idea of the state of society and manners in Scotland, from the Waverley novels, than from the best of its historians ; of the condition of the Middle Ages, from the single romance of Ivanhoe, than from the volumes of Hume or Hallam ? In like manner, the pencil of Cervantes has given a far more distinct and a richer portraiture of life in Spain, in the sixteenth century, than can be gathered from a library of monkish chronicles.

Spain, which furnished the first good model of this kind of writing, seems to have possessed more ample materials for it, than any other country, except England. This is perhaps owing, in a great degree, to the freedom and originality of the popular character. It is the country where the lower classes make the nearest approaches, in their conversation, to what is called humor. Many of the national proverbs are seasoned with it ; as well as the *picaresco* tales, the indigenous growth of the soil, where, however, the humor runs rather too much to mere practical jokes. The free expansion of the popular characteristics may be traced, in part, to the freedom of the political institutions of the country, before the iron hand of the Austrian dynasty was laid on it. The long wars with the Moslem invaders called every peasant into the field, and gave him a degree of personal consideration. In some of the provinces, indeed, as Catalonia, the democratic spirit frequently rose to an uncontrollable height. In this free atmosphere, the rich and peculiar traits of national character were unfolded. The territorial divisions which marked the peninsula, broken up anciently into a number of petty and independent states, gave, moreover, great variety to the national portraiture. The rude Asturian, the haughty and indolent Castilian, the industrious Arragonese, the independent Catalan, the jealous and wily Andalusian, the effeminate Valencian, and the magnificent Granadine, furnished an infinite variety of character and costume for the study of the artist. The intermixture of Asiatic races, to an extent unknown in any other European land, was favorable to the same result. The Jews and the Moors were settled in too great numbers, and for too many centuries, in the land, not to have left traces of their Oriental civilization. The best blood of the country has flowed from what the modern Spaniard, the Spaniard of the Inquisition, regards as impure

sources ; and a work, popular in the peninsula, under the name of *Tizon de España*, or “ Brand of Spain,” maliciously traces back the pedigrees of the noblest houses in the kingdom to a Jewish or Morisco origin. All these circumstances have conspired to give a highly poetic interest to the character of the Spaniards ; to make them, in fact, the most picturesque of European nations, affording richer and far more various subjects for the novelist, than other nations, whose peculiarities have been kept down by the weight of a despotic government, or the artificial and levelling laws of fashion. How narrow a field is afforded to the novelist, in a highly artificial state of society, like that of France, for example, where conventional forms have penetrated to the lowest ranks, regulating and controlling, as it were, the natural play of character. France, in point of fact, has produced only one writer of first-rate excellence, in this walk of fiction, Le Sage ; and he confessed the inferiority of his own country for his purposes, by drawing his pictures exclusively from Spain.

There is one other point of view, in which the *Don Quixote* presents itself, that of its didactic import. It is not merely moral in its general tendency, though this was a rare virtue in the age in which it was written, but is replete with admonition and criticism, oftentimes requiring great boldness, as well as originality, in the author. Such, for instance, are the derision of witchcraft, and other superstitions, common to the Spaniards ; the ridicule of torture, which, though not used in the ordinary courts, was familiar to the Inquisition ; the frequent strictures on various departments and productions of literature. The literary criticism scattered throughout the work shows a profound acquaintance with the true principles of taste, far before his time, and which has left his judgments of the writings of his countrymen still of paramount authority. In truth, the great scope of his work was didactic, for it was a satire against the false taste of his age. And never was there a satire so completely successful. The last romance of chivalry, before the appearance of the *Don Quixote*, came out in 1602. It was the last that was ever published in Spain. So completely was this kind of writing, which had bade defiance to every serious effort, now extinguished by the breath of ridicule,

“ That soft and summer breath, whose subtile power
Passes the strength of storms, in their most desolate hour.”

It was impossible for any new author to gain an audience. The

public had seen how the thunder was fabricated. The spectator had been behind the scenes, and witnessed of what cheap materials kings and queens were made. It was impossible for him, by any stretch of imagination, to convert the tinsel and painted bawbles which he had seen there into diadems and sceptres. The illusion had fled for ever.

Satire seldom survives the local or temporary interests, against which it is directed. It loses its life with its sting. The satire of Cervantes is an exception. The objects at which it was aimed, have long since ceased to interest. The modern reader is attracted to the book, simply by its execution as a work of art ; and, from want of previous knowledge, comprehends few of the allusions, which gave such infinite zest to the perusal in its own day. Yet, under all these disadvantages, it not only maintains its popularity, but is far more widely extended, and enjoys far higher consideration, than in the life of its author. Such are the triumphs of genius !

Cervantes correctly appreciated his own work. He more than once predicted its popularity. "I will lay a wager," says Sancho, "that before long there will not be a chop-house, tavern, or barber's stall, but will have a painting of our achievements." The honest squire's prediction was verified in his own day ; and the author might have seen paintings of his work, on wood and on canvass, as well as copperplate engravings of it. Besides several editions of it at home, it was printed, in his own time, in Portugal, Flanders, and Italy. Since that period, it has passed into numberless editions, both in Spain, and other countries. It has been translated into nearly every European tongue, over and over again ; into English ten times, into French eight, and others less frequently. We will close the present notice with a brief view of some of the principal editions, together with that at the head of our article.

The currency of the romance among all classes, frequently invited its publication by incompetent hands ; and the consequence was a plentiful crop of errors, until the original text was nearly despoiled of its beauty, — while some passages were omitted, and foreign ones still more shamefully interpolated. The first attempt to retrieve the original from these harpies, who thus foully violated it, singularly enough, was made in England. Queen Caroline, the wife of George the Second, had formed a collection of books of romance, which

she playfully named the "library of the sage Merlin." The romance of Cervantes, alone, was wanting; and a nobleman, Lord Carteret, undertook to provide her with a suitable copy, at his own expense. This was the origin of the celebrated edition published by Tonson, in London, 1738, 4 tom. 4to. It contained the Life of the Author, written for it by the learned Mayans y Siscar. It was the first biography (which merits the name) of Cervantes; and it shows into what oblivion his personal history had already fallen, that no less than seven towns claimed each the honor of giving him birth. The fate of Cervantes resembled that of Homer.

The example thus set by foreigners excited an honorable emulation at home; and at length, in 1780, a magnificent edition, from the far-famed press of Ibarra, was published at Madrid in 4 tom. 4to, under the auspices of the Royal Spanish Academy; which, unlike many other literary bodies of sounding name, has contributed most essentially to the advancement of letters, not merely by original memoirs, but by learned and very beautiful editions of ancient writers. Its *Don Quixote* exhibits a most careful revision of the text, collated from the several copies printed in the author's lifetime, and supposed to have received his own emendations. There is too good reason to believe that these corrections were made with a careless hand; at all events there is a plentiful harvest of typographical blunders in these primitive editions.

Prefixed to the publication of the Academy, is the *Life of Cervantes* by Rios, written with uncommon elegance, and containing nearly all that is of much interest in his personal history. A copious analysis of the romance follows this, in which a parallel is closely elaborated between it and the poems of Homer. But the romantic and the classical differ too widely from each other to admit of such an approximation; and the method of proceeding necessarily involves its author in infinite absurdities, which show an entire ignorance of the true principles of philosophical criticism, and which he would scarcely have fallen into, had he given heed to the maxims of Cervantes himself.

In the following year, 1781, there appeared another edition in England, deserving of particular notice. It was prepared by the Rev. Mr. Bowle, a clergyman at Idemestone, who was so enamoured of the romance of Cervantes, that, after collecting a library of such works as could any way illustrate his author, he spent fourteen years in preparing a suitable commentary on

him. There was ample scope for such a commentary. Many of the satirical allusions of the romance were misunderstood, as we have said, owing to ignorance of the books of chivalry, at which they were aimed. Many incidents and usages, familiar to the age of Cervantes, had long since fallen into oblivion. And much of the idiomatic phraseology had grown to be obsolete, and required explanation. Cervantes himself had fallen into some egregious blunders, which, in his subsequent revision of the work, he had neglected to set right. The reader will readily call to mind the confusion as to Sancho's Dapple, who appears and disappears, most unaccountably, on the scene, according as the author happens to remember or forget that he was stolen. He afterwards corrected this, in two or three instances, but left three or four others unheeded. To the same account must be charged numberless gross anachronisms. Indeed, the whole Second Part is an anachronism, since the author introduces his hero criticizing the First Part, in which his own epitaph is recorded.

Cervantes seems to have had a great distaste for the work of revision. Some of his blunders he laid at the printer's door ; and others he dismissed with the remark, more ingenious than true, that they were like moles, which, though blemishes in themselves, add to the beauty of the countenance. He little dreamed, that his lapses were to be watched so narrowly, that a catalogue was actually to be set down of all his repetitions and inconsistencies, and that each of his hero's sallies was to be adjusted by an accurate chronological table, like any real history. He would have been still slower to believe, that in the middle of the eighteenth century, a learned society, the Academy of Literature and Fine Arts at Troyes, in Champagne, should have chosen a deputation of their body to visit Spain, and examine the library of the Escorial, in order to obtain, if possible, the original MS. of that Arabian sage, from whom Cervantes professed to have translated his romance. This was to be more mad than Don Quixote himself. Yet this actually happened.

Bowle's edition was printed in six volumes, quarto ; the two last contained notes, illustrations, and index, all, as well as the text, in Castilian. Watt, in his laborious "*Bibliotheca Britannica*," remarks, that the book did not come up to the public expectation. If so, the public must have been very unreasonable. It was a marvellous achievement for a foreigner. It was the first attempt at a commentary on the Quixote, and, although

doubtless exhibiting inaccuracies, which a native might have escaped, has been a rich mine of illustration, from which native critics have helped themselves most liberally, and sometimes with scanty acknowledgment.

The example of the English critic led to similar labors in Spain ; among the most successful of which may be mentioned the edition by Pellicer, which has commended itself to every scholar by its very learned disquisitions on many topics both of history and criticism. It also contains a valuable memoir of Cervantes ; whose life has since been written, in a manner which leaves nothing further to be desired, by Navarrete, well known by his laborious publication of documents relative to the early Spanish discoveries. His biography of the novelist comprehends all the information, direct and subsidiary, which can now be brought together, for the elucidation of his personal or literary history. If Cervantes, like his great contemporary, Shakspeare, has left few authentic details of his existence, the deficiency has been diligently supplied, in both cases, by speculation and conjecture.

There was still wanting a classical commentary on the *Quixote*, devoted to the literary execution of the work. Such a commentary has at length appeared, from the pen of Clemencin, the accomplished secretary of the Spanish Academy of History, who had acquired a high reputation for himself, by the publication of the sixth volume of its *Memoirs*, the exclusive work of his own hand. In his edition of the romance, besides illuminating with rare learning many of the obscure points in the narrative, he has accompanied the text with a severe, but enlightened criticism, which, while it boldly exposes occasional offences against taste or grammar, directs the eye to those latent beauties, which might escape a rapid or an ordinary reader. We much doubt if any Castilian classic has been so ably illustrated. Unfortunately, the First Part only was completed by the commentator, who died very recently. It will not be easy to find a critic, equally qualified, by his taste and erudition, for the completion of the work.

The English, as we have noticed, have evinced their relish for Cervantes, not only by their critical labors, but by repeated translations. Some of these are executed with much skill, considering the difficulty of correctly rendering the idiomatic phraseology of humorous dialogue. The most popular versions are those of Motteux, Jarvis, and Smollett. Perhaps

the first is the best of all. It was by a Frenchman, who came over to England in the time of James the Second. It betrays nothing of its foreign parentage, however, while its rich and racy diction, and its quaint turns of expression, are admirably suited to convey a lively and very faithful image of the original. The slight tinge of antiquity, which belongs to the time, is not displeasing, and comports well with the tone of knightly dignity, which distinguishes the hero. Lockhart's notes, and poetical versions of old Castilian ballads, appended to the recent edition of Motteux, have rendered it by far the most desirable translation. — It is singular, that the first classical edition of *Don Quixote*, the first commentary, and probably the best foreign translation, should have been all produced in England; and further, that the English commentator should have written in Spanish, and the English translation have been by a Frenchman.

We now come to Mr. Sales's recent edition of the original; the first, probably, which has appeared in the *New World*, of the one half of which the Spanish is the spoken language. There was great need of some uniform edition, to meet the wants of our University, where much inconvenience has been long experienced from the discrepancies of the copies used. The only ones to be procured in this country, are contemptible both in regard to printing and paper, and are defaced by the grossest errors. They are the careless manufacture of ill-informed Spanish booksellers, made to sell, and dear to boot.

Mr. Sales has adopted a right plan, for remedying these several evils. He has carefully formed his text on that of the last and most correct edition of the Academy; and as he has stereotyped the work, any verbal errors may be easily rectified. The Academy has substituted the modern orthography for that of Cervantes, who, independently of the change which has gradually taken place in the language, seems to have had no uniform system himself. Mr. Sales has conformed to the rules prescribed by this high authority, for regulating his orthography, accent, and punctuation. In some instances, only, he has adopted the ancient usage, in beginning words with *f* instead of *h*, and retaining obsolete terminations of verbs, as *hablades* for *hablais*, *hablabades* for *hablabais*, *amades* for *amais*, *amabades* for *amabais*, &c., no doubt as better suited to the lofty tone of the good Knight's discourses,

who himself affected a reverence for the antique, in his conversation, to which his translators have not always sufficiently attended.

In one respect, the present editor has made some alterations not before attempted, we believe, in the text of his original. We have already noticed the inaccuracies of the early copies of the *Don Quixote*, partly imputable to Cervantes himself, and in a greater degree, doubtless, to his printers. There is no way of rectifying such errors by collation with the author's manuscript, which has long since disappeared. All that can now be done, therefore, is to point out the purer reading, in a note, as Clemencin, Arrieta, and other commentators have done, or, as Mr. Sales has preferred, to introduce it into the body of the text. We will give one or two specimens of these alterations.

“Poco mas ó menos.” — tom. i., p. 141.

The reading in the old editions is “poco mas á menos”; a phrase as unintelligible in Spanish now, as its literal translation would be in English; although in use, it would seem from other authorities, in the age of Cervantes.

“Por tales os juzgué y tuve.” — tom. i., p. 104.

The old editions add “siempre,” which clearly is incorrect, since *Don Quixote* is speaking of the present occasion.

“*Don Quijote* quedó admirado.” — tom. i., p. 143.

Other editions read “*El cual* quedó,” &c. The use of the relative leaves the reader in doubt who is intended; and Mr. Sales, in conformity to Clemencin's suggestion, has made the sentence clear by substituting the name of the Knight.

“Donde les *sucedieron* cosas,” &c. — tom. ii., p. 44.

In other editions “*sucedió*,” — bad grammar, since it agrees with a plural noun.

“En tan poco espacio de tiempo como ha que *estuvo* allá,” &c., tom. ii., p. 132; instead of “*está* allá,” clearly the wrong tense, since the verb refers to past time.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples, a sufficient number of which have been cited, to show on what principles the emendations have been made. They have been confined to the correction of such violations of grammar, or such inaccuracies of expression, as obscure or distort the meaning. They

have been made with great circumspection, and in obedience to the suggestion of the highest authorities in the language. For the critical scholar, who would naturally prefer the primitive text, with all its impurities, they were not designed. But they are of infinite value to the general reader and the student, who may now read this beautiful classic, purified from those verbal blemishes, which, however obvious to a native, could not fail to mislead a foreigner.

Besides these emendations, Mr. Sales has illustrated the work by prefixing to it the admirable preliminary discourse of Clemencin, and by a considerable body of notes, selected and abridged from the most approved commentators; and as the object has been to explain the text to the reader, not to involve him in antiquarian or critical disquisitions, when his authorities have failed to do this, the editor has supplied notes of his own, throwing much light on matters least familiar to a foreigner. In this part of his work, we think he might have derived considerable aid from Bowle, whom he does not appear to have consulted. The Castilian commentator, Arrieta, whom he liberally uses, is largely indebted to the English critic, who, as a foreigner, moreover, has been led into many seasonable explanations, that would be superfluous to a Spaniard.

We may notice another peculiarity in the present edition, that of breaking up the text into reasonable paragraphs, in imitation of the English translations; a great relief to the spirits of the reader, which are seriously damped, in the ancient copies, by the interminable waste of page upon page, without these convenient halting-places.

But our readers, we fear, will think we are running into an interminable waste of discussion. We will only remark, therefore, in conclusion, that the mechanical execution of the book is highly creditable to our press. It is, moreover, adorned with etchings, by our American Cruikshank, Johnston, — some of them original, but mostly copies from the late English edition of Smollett's translation. They are designed and executed with much spirit, and, no doubt, would have fully satisfied honest Sancho, who, as we have seen, predicted this kind of immortality for himself and his master.

We congratulate the public on the possession of an edition of the pride of Castilian literature, from our own press, in so neat a form, and executed with so much correctness and judgment; and we trust that the ambition of its respectable

editor will be gratified, by its becoming, as it well deserves to be, the manual of the student, in every seminary, throughout the country, where the noble Castilian language is taught.

- ART. II. — 1. *Archæologia Americana : Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society.* Vol. 2d. Cambridge. Printed for the Society at the University Press. 1836. pp. 573.
2. *Inquiries respecting the History, Traditions, Languages, Manners, Customs, Religion, &c., of the Indians living within the United States.* Detroit. Printed by Sheldon & Reed. 1823. pp. 64.

THE early history of the aborigines is taking a deeper hold on literary attention in America. Materials for its illustration have, from time to time, appeared, rather, however, as the result of casual, than of professed research. It is only within late years, that systematic inquiries into the curious principles of their languages and intellectual character, have been made, and these efforts are due, almost entirely, to individual zeal. Literary associations have been called to act, rather as auxiliaries, than principals, in these investigations. Perhaps there is something in our state of society, and the limited means of action of our learned and scientific bodies, to lead to this. Few of these incorporations have, however, commenced their career under more encouraging auspices than the American Antiquarian Society. Its first volume was given up, in great part, to the consideration of what may be called the monumental history of the Indians. Whatever posterity may, however, agree to think of the ancient mounds and other marks of labor, which are found over a large surface of the country, particularly west of the Alleghanies, there must be far less of doubt attending conclusions drawn from investigations of the principles of the Indian languages.

Mounds and ditches very conclusively show the sites of ancient labor. A clay pot, or an arrow head, clearly enough demonstrates the state of the arts among the people who used these articles. But oral language is the chief object which can, in any degree, supply literary data from a people who are